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# THE WORKS OF THE AMERICAN ETCHERS.

## XVI.—OTTO H. BACHER.



OTTO H. BACHER is a young American artist studying in Europe, whose name will probably be unknown to the majority of the readers of the REVIEW. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, March 31st, 1856, and began his career as an art student in 1874. In September, 1878, he went abroad, and spent some time at Munich, but at last accounts he was at Venice, with Mr. Duveneck and his band of pupils. His first experiments in etching, made in 1876, resulted in the spoiling of many coppers, with some moderate successes; but, although he was greatly interested in the art, and it became his pet study, the attention demanded by painting prevented him from devoting as much time to it as he might have wished to give it. After he had become established in Europe, he again took up etching with renewed energy, and resolved to devote to it most of the summer of 1879. With this purpose in view he prepared upwards of forty plates for Hamerton's "positive process,"—which, it will be remembered, involves etching in the bath,—and of these he used twenty-seven, three of which he discarded. Below is a list of the twenty-four plates which constitute the fruits of this campaign. In lieu of titles, the dates, etc. found upon the plates are here given just as they stand, including occasional "slips of the pen," such as *Daube* for Danube, etc. They are sometimes placed in the margin, sometimes within the design itself; and the signature—frequently only the first name, Otto—generally occupies one corner of the plate, while the date, etc. is relegated to the other.

*Otto.* (Orchard, house in the distance.) — Size of plate : breadth,  $6\frac{1}{8}$ " ; height,  $2\frac{3}{8}$ ".

*Otto.* (Village, ferry-boat crossing the river.) — Size of plate : b.  $9\frac{3}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Rest. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $6\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Royal Garden. Schleissheim. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $5\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $8\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Unter Schleissheim. Otto H. Bacher.* — Engraved surface : b.  $11\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{4}$ ".

*Lustheim. June 20. 79. Otto.* — Size of plate : b.  $8\frac{5}{8}$ " ; h. 4".

*Otto. Schleissheim. June 20. 79.* — Engraved surface : b.  $7\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Schleissheim. June 21. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $8\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $4\frac{3}{4}$ ".

*Schleissheim. June 28. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $3\frac{3}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Lustheim. June 28. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $10\frac{5}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*July 25. 79. Otto.* (River bank.) — Size of plate : b.  $7\frac{3}{4}$ " ; h.  $2\frac{7}{8}$ ".

*Daube at Walhalla. Aug. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $6\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{3}{4}$ ".

*Donaustauf. Aug. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $10\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Otto. Regensburg. Aug. 4. 79.* — Size of plate : b.  $7\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Regensburg. Aug. 5. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $10\frac{7}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{2}$ ".

*Otto. Danube. 79.* — Size of plate : b.  $8\frac{5}{8}$ " ; h.  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ".

*Danube. Aug. 11. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $8\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{8}$ ".

*Otto. Schwabelweiss. Sept. 3. 79.* — Size of plate : b.  $8\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ". Plate owned by the AMERICAN ART REVIEW.

*Auf Stauffa Bruck. Sept. 5. 79. Otto.* — Engraved surface : b.  $8\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $2\frac{7}{8}$ ". Published herewith.

*Staufa Bruck.* Otto H. Bacher. — Size of plate : b.  $9\frac{5}{8}$ " ; h. 4".

*Sutzbach.* Otto. Sept. 79. — Size of plate : b.  $8\frac{3}{8}$ " ; h.  $2\frac{7}{8}$ ".

*Otto H. Bacher.* Oct. 4. 79. (Rustic bridge.) — Engraved surface : b.  $11\frac{1}{8}$ " ; h.  $4\frac{3}{8}$ ".

*Wörth.* Otto H. Bacher. 79. (Different view of same bridge.) — Engraved surface : b.  $10\frac{7}{8}$ " ; h.  $5\frac{1}{2}$ ".

*Otto. Worth.* 79. — Engraved surface : b. 8" ; h.  $5\frac{7}{8}$ ".

It will be seen from the subjects mentioned in this list that Mr. Bacher's artistic hunting-ground was located in the neighborhood of Munich and along the Danube. The motive of the plate herewith published, *Auf Staufa Bruck* (On Staufa Bridge, *Bruck* being a provincialism for *Brücke*), he found near the ancient village of Donaustauf, which lies at the foot of the Walhalla. For etchers it may be interesting to know that this plate was completed in two sittings.

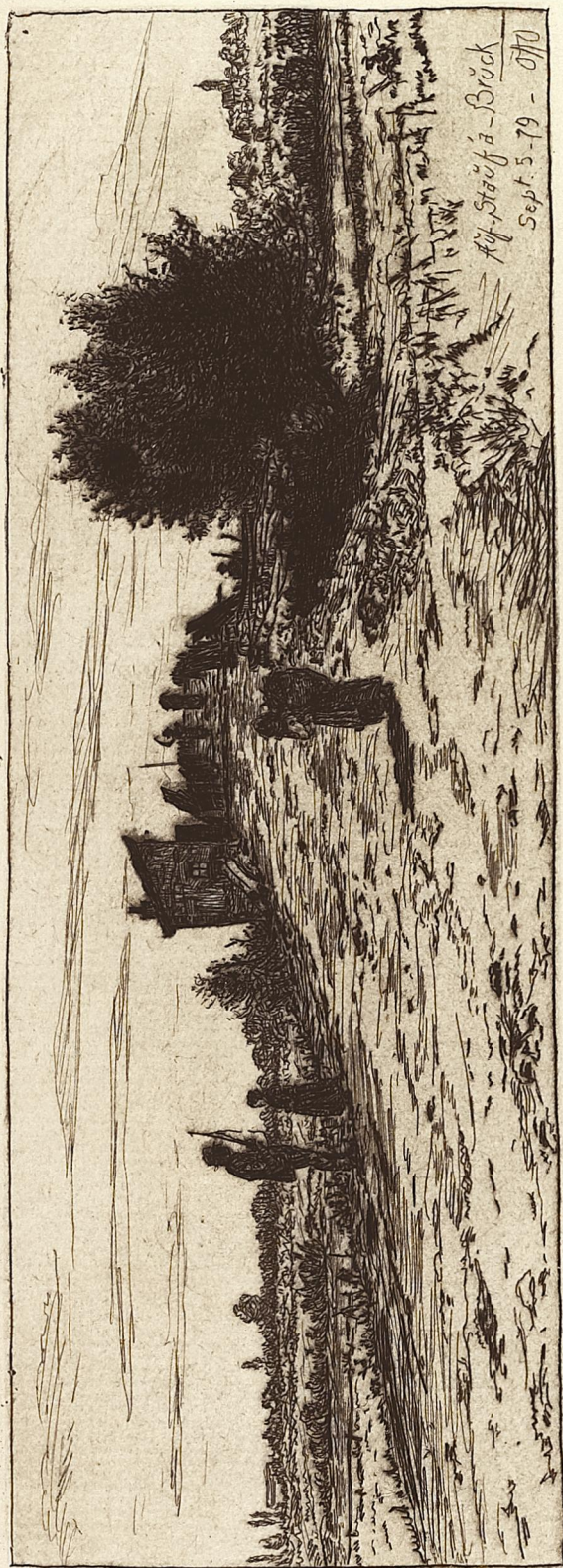
The fact that Mr. Bacher passed unmoved by the Walhalla, as it lies perched in monumental grandeur on the declivity of the Brauberg, two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the stream, and then stopped to make a loving study of a rickety old wooden bridge, enlivened with a few drudging peasants, is quite significant. It is enforced by the observation that the romantic banks of the Danube failed to supply him with other motives—if we except the large plate of *Regensburg*, Aug. 5. 79—than quiet nooks and corners, peasants' houses, old walls and gates, and things of a like nature. Twenty or thirty years ago, the young artist travelling along the river would have revelled in its "romantic" aspects, but the realism of to-day has changed all that, and one need only look over the collection of Mr. Bacher's etchings to become convinced that he is wholly of to-day.

Few only of Mr. Bacher's plates have what in the popular and not more than half understood jargon of the hour is called "tone." But if "tone" means, as it ought to mean, the thoroughly well preserved relation of values within the scale that has been adopted, then Mr. Bacher's best efforts may lay claim to the much coveted and much abused adjective, even if he prefer the clear light of day to the poetical allurements of twilight. That he is most skilful in the use of the line need hardly be emphasized in the presence of the plate which accompanies this article. Equally unnecessary is it to say that his plates vary. Some are less well drawn than others; a few are over, some under bitten. But, judging by them as a whole, and even without singling out merely the best of them, it is safe to say that in Mr. Bacher we may welcome a most original talent, with a quick eye for the important in nature, and therefore of great promise for the future.

In a letter received not long ago from Venice, Mr. Bacher writes: "My usual practice has been to complete with nature before me; but in Venice, finding the 'positive process' impracticable, I use the old black ground, *biting* and *stopping out* in-doors." Of these Venetian etchings I cannot yet speak, as none of them have thus far come under my notice.

— S. R. KOEHLER.





Ky. Stauf á Brück  
Sept. 5-79 - 070